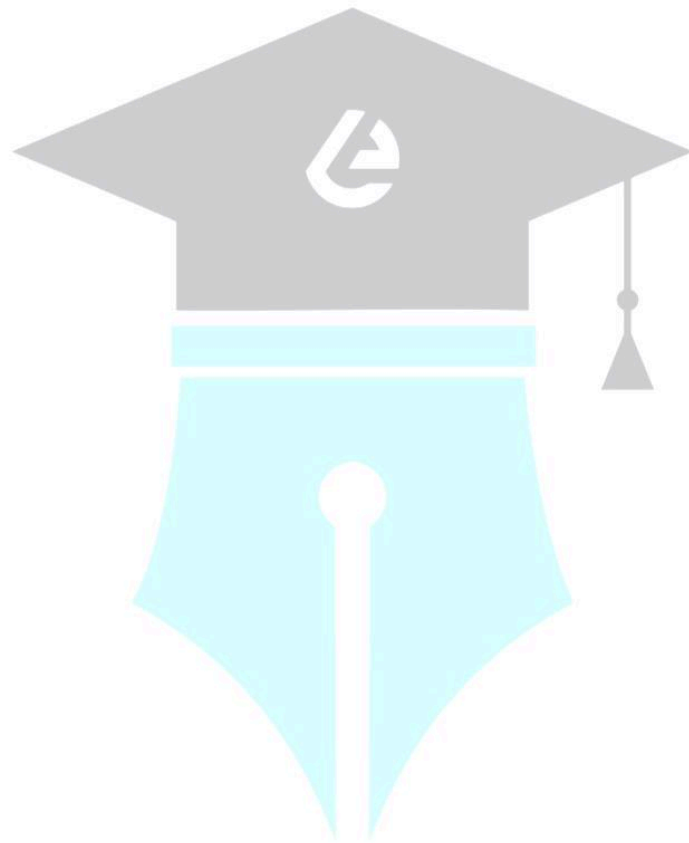


ODISHA Land Reform (OCS MAINS-23)

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● Odisha Land Reform: Comprehensive Notes

● Introduction

Odisha, a predominantly agrarian state, has implemented various land reforms to:

- ✓ Ensure equitable land distribution
- ✓ Abolish feudal land structures
- ✓ Protect tenants and tribal communities
- ✓ Improve agricultural productivity

The reforms aimed at **ending exploitation by landlords, regulating tenancy, and distributing land to the landless**, particularly to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

● 1. Pre-Independence Land Tenure System in Odisha

Before independence, Odisha's **agrarian structure was highly exploitative**, dominated by powerful landlords and intermediaries. Farmers faced **high rents, insecurity, and little ownership rights**.

✦ A. Zamindari System

- Introduced by the British, zamindars (landlords) acted as **revenue collectors**.
- Peasants (raiyyats) were forced to pay **exorbitant taxes**.
- **No ownership rights** for cultivators, leading to widespread evictions.
- Resulted in **rural poverty, bonded labor, and migration**.

✦ B. Ryotwari System

- Farmers (ryots) paid **taxes directly to the British government**.
- More autonomy than zamindari but **still burdened by high taxation**.

✦ C. Mahalwari System

- Entire **villages collectively paid revenue**.
- The burden was **shared**, but it often led to conflicts.

◆ **Effect of these systems: Widespread exploitation, land alienation, and agrarian distress.**

● 2. Post-Independence Land Reforms in Odisha

After independence, the government launched **a series of land reforms** to improve agrarian conditions.

● A. Abolition of Intermediaries (Zamindari Abolition Act, 1951)

📖 **Odisha Estate Abolition Act, 1951** was enacted to:

- ✓ **Abolish zamindars and intermediaries.**
- ✓ **Transfer land ownership to the state**, making tenants direct landowners.
- ✓ **Remove feudal exploitation** and increase farmers' autonomy.

💡 **Outcome:** Large estates were abolished, but **zamindars manipulated records**, keeping portions of land under their control.

● B. Tenancy Reforms (Odisha Land Reforms Act, 1960)

The **Odisha Land Reforms Act (OLR Act), 1960** was a landmark legislation to protect tenant farmers (**Bhagachasis**) from exploitation.

✂️ **Key Features:**

- ✓ **Security of Tenure** – Tenants could not be evicted arbitrarily.
- ✓ **Fair Rent** – Maximum **rent capped at 25% of the gross produce.**
- ✓ **Ownership Rights** – Long-term tenants were granted rights to **purchase land.**
- ✓ **Prohibition of Benami Transfers** – Prevented landlords from keeping land in false names.
- ✓ **Protection from Eviction** – Landlords could not forcibly remove sharecroppers.

💡 **Effect:** Many tenants gained **land rights**, but loopholes allowed landlords to **evade** tenancy laws through informal agreements.

● C. Land Ceiling and Redistribution

To **prevent land concentration**, the **Odisha Land Reforms Act (Amended in 1973 & 1974)** introduced **landholding limits**:

- ✓ **Ceiling Fixed** –
 - **Standard landowners:** 10 standard acres (1 standard acre = productivity-based).
 - **Irrigated landowners:** 18 acres.
 - **Non-irrigated landowners:** 35 acres.
- ✓ **Surplus Land Distribution** –
 - **Excess land taken from big landlords.**
 - **Distributed to landless farmers.**

◆ **Challenges:**

- ✗ **Loopholes allowed landlords to bypass ceilings** (e.g., dividing land among relatives).
- ✗ **Slow identification of surplus land** delayed implementation.

● **D. Protection of Tribal Land**

Scheduled Tribes (STs) were **most vulnerable to land alienation**. To protect them:

📖 **Odisha Scheduled Areas Transfer of Immovable Property (by Scheduled Tribes) Regulation, 1956**

- ✓ **Prohibited land transfer from tribals to non-tribals** without government approval.
- ✓ **Restricted corporate land acquisitions** in tribal regions.

📖 **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA)**

- ✓ **Recognized forest land rights** of tribals who had lived there for generations.
- ✓ **Provided legal titles to tribal forest dwellers.**

◆ **Challenges:**

- ✗ **Industries and infrastructure projects** displaced tribals despite legal protection.
- ✗ **Implementation gaps and bureaucratic delays** in recognizing forest rights.

● **E. Consolidation of Landholdings**

📖 **Orissa Consolidation of Holdings and Prevention of Fragmentation of Land Act, 1972** aimed to:

- ✓ **Merge small landholdings** into larger, more productive farms.
- ✓ **Prevent excessive fragmentation** that reduced productivity.

◆ **Challenges:**

- ✗ **Resistance from farmers** reluctant to exchange their ancestral land.
- ✗ **Implementation delays** reduced the effectiveness.

● **F. Land Record Digitization**

📖 **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)**

📖 **Bhulekh Odisha (Online Land Record Portal)**

- ✓ **Digitization of land records** to improve transparency.
- ✓ **Reduced disputes** and made land transactions easier.

◆ **Challenges:**

- ✗ **Slow data entry and errors in digitization** created confusion.
- ✗ **Rural areas still lack digital access** to online records.

● **3. Challenges in Land Reform Implementation**

Despite reforms, major challenges remain:

- ✗ **Slow Implementation** – Bureaucratic delays.
- ✗ **Corruption** – Fake records and illegal land grabbing.
- ✗ **Landlessness** – Many landless farmers still lack access to land.
- ✗ **Fragmentation** – Small holdings persist despite consolidation efforts.
- ✗ **Tribal Displacement** – Infrastructure projects often force evictions.

● **4. Impact of Land Reforms in Odisha**

- ✓ **Tenants secured land rights**, reducing landlord exploitation.
- ✓ **Small farmers gained landownership**, boosting rural livelihoods.
- ✓ **Reduced feudal landholding patterns** and increased agricultural productivity.
- ✓ **Tribal land was protected**, but enforcement gaps remain.
- ✓ **Modernization of land records**, improving transparency.

● **5. Recent Developments in Odisha Land Reform**

✦ **KALIA Scheme (2018)**

- ✓ **Financial aid** to small/marginal farmers and landless laborers.

✦ **Bhoodan and Gramdan Movements**

- ✓ **Land voluntarily donated** and redistributed to landless farmers.

✦ **Odisha Right to Public Services Act, 2012**

- ✓ **Ensures timely delivery** of land records and property documents.

● **Conclusion**

- ✓ **Odisha's land reforms** significantly improved **land tenure security and social equity**.
- ✓ **However, challenges like corruption, illegal evictions, and tribal displacement** persist.
- ✓ **Stronger enforcement, digital technology, and policy reforms** are needed for full realization of land rights.

● Odisha Land Reforms Act, 1960 (OLR Act) – Detailed Analysis

The **Odisha Land Reforms Act, 1960 (OLR Act)** was enacted to bring comprehensive changes in land ownership, tenancy rights, and land ceilings. It aimed to remove landlordism, protect tenants, impose landholding limits, and promote equitable land distribution.

● Objectives of the Odisha Land Reforms Act, 1960

1. **Abolition of landlordism and intermediaries.**
2. **Security of tenure** for tenants and sharecroppers.
3. **Fixation of land ceilings** to prevent excessive land concentration.
4. **Redistribution of surplus land** to landless peasants.
5. **Protection of tribal land** from alienation.
6. **Prevention of fragmentation and encouragement of land consolidation.**

● In-Depth Analysis of the Bhoodan Movement in Odisha

● Introduction

The **Bhoodan Movement** (Land Gift Movement) was a **voluntary land donation initiative** led by **Acharya Vinoba Bhave** in 1951. It aimed to bridge the gap between **landowners and landless peasants** by encouraging **landlords to donate surplus land voluntarily**.

Odisha played a crucial role in the movement, becoming the **second-largest land contributor after Bihar**. However, despite its **initial success**, the movement faced **several implementation challenges** that affected its overall impact.

● Historical Background of Bhoodan Movement

✦ Origins of the Bhoodan Movement in India (1951)

- ✓ The movement started in **Pochampally, Telangana**, when Vinoba Bhave received **100 acres of land** from landlords for redistribution to the poor.
- ✓ It was deeply **influenced by Gandhian principles of non-violence and trusteeship**, which urged landlords to act as **"trustees" of land** and share it with the needy.
- ✓ It later evolved into the **Gramdan (village donation) movement**, where entire villages collectively gave up land for communal ownership.

✦ Bhoodan Movement in Odisha (1952–1970s)

- ✓ **Odisha actively participated** in the Bhoodan movement.
- ✓ Large estates and zamindars still existed, despite land reform laws.

- ✓ Many landowners saw Bhoodan as a **way to retain social prestige** while avoiding government-imposed land ceilings.

● Bhoodan Movement in Odisha: Phases & Developments

The movement in Odisha had **two major phases**:

● Phase 1: Bhoodan (Land Donation) (1952–1960s)

📖 **Objective** – Encouraging wealthy landowners to **voluntarily donate land** to landless farmers.

📖 **Implementation** – Landowners pledged land, which was then redistributed.

✦ Key Developments in Odisha:

✓ **Vinoba Bhave visited Odisha in 1955** and traveled across the state to promote Bhoodan.

✓ Massive **public awareness campaigns** were organized to convince landowners.

✓ Large land donations were made, particularly in **tribal and rural regions**.

◆ Outcome:

✓ Over **6 lakh acres of land** was pledged for donation in Odisha.

✓ The movement gained **momentum in western Odisha and tribal areas**.

● Phase 2: Gramdan (Village Donation) (1960s–1970s)

📖 **Objective** – Promoting **collective ownership of land** at the village level.

📖 **Implementation** – Entire villages voluntarily donated land to establish a **cooperative landholding system**.

✦ Key Developments in Odisha:

✓ Odisha became one of the leading states in **Gramdan participation**.

✓ Several villages declared **complete land donation for communal use**.

✓ The **Odisha Gramdan Act, 1965** was passed to legally recognize **village-based land redistribution**.

◆ Outcome:

✓ Around **7,000 villages participated in Gramdan**, making Odisha **one of the leading states** in the movement.

✓ Inspired **cooperative farming models** in rural Odisha.

● Achievements of the Bhoodan Movement in Odisha

◆ **Massive Land Pledges** – Odisha witnessed **one of the highest land donations** in India.

◆ **Tribal Land Redistribution** – Many **tribal communities** gained land, improving their livelihood.

◆ **Public Awareness** – The movement **raised consciousness about land inequality** and inspired future land reforms.

◆ **Legal Recognition** – Odisha passed the **Odisha Gramdan Act, 1965**, which provided a legal framework for voluntary land redistribution.

● Challenges and Limitations of Bhoodan in Odisha

Despite its **moral appeal and initial success**, the movement **faced several practical challenges** in Odisha:

✂ 1. Poor Implementation & Land Quality

- ✗ Many of the donated lands were **infertile, barren, or disputed**.
- ✗ **Marginal lands** were often given away, leaving landless farmers with **unproductive plots**.
- ✗ Some landlords **pledged land only on paper** but never handed over possession.

✂ 2. Bureaucratic and Legal Issues

- ✗ Lack of **proper land records** created disputes over ownership.
- ✗ The government **failed to legally transfer** many donated lands to the poor.
- ✗ Slow and inefficient land distribution led to **frustration among beneficiaries**.

✂ 3. Resistance from Landowners

- ✗ Many landlords **used Bhoodan as a way to escape land ceiling laws**.
- ✗ Instead of donating fertile lands, they gave **rocky, unproductive lands**.
- ✗ Some landlords **reclaimed donated lands** illegally after the movement weakened.

✂ 4. Weak Institutional Support

- ✗ The movement **lacked financial and administrative backing** from the government.
- ✗ No **long-term support** for land recipients (irrigation, loans, seeds, fertilizers).

✂ 5. Decline of the Movement

- ✗ By the 1970s, Bhoodan **lost momentum** as government-led **land ceiling laws** took over.
- ✗ Political interference and lack of local leadership further **weakened its impact**.

● Impact of Bhoodan Movement in Odisha

✧ Short-Term Impact (1952–1970s):

- ✓ Raised awareness about **land rights and social justice**.
- ✓ Encouraged **voluntary redistribution of land**.
- ✓ Brought **tribal and rural land issues into focus**.

✧ Long-Term Impact (Post-1970s):

- ✓ Inspired **government-led land reforms**, including:

- **Odisha Land Reforms Act, 1960**
- **Land Ceiling Laws (1973, 1974 Amendments)**
 - ✓ Laid the foundation for **tribal land protection laws**.
 - ✓ Inspired **cooperative farming models** in some Gramdan villages.
- ◆ However, due to poor execution, much of its potential remained unrealized.

● Comparison with Land Reforms in Odisha

Feature	Bhoodan Movement	Government Land Reforms (OLR Act, 1960)
Nature	Voluntary land donation	Legally enforced land redistribution
Implementation	Informal, people-driven	Government-administered
Success Rate	Moderate, but poorly implemented	More systematic, but slow
Landowners' Role	Voluntary donation	Forced land ceiling
Long-Term Impact	Raised awareness, but faded	More sustained impact

● Conclusion: Was Bhoodan in Odisha Successful?

✓ Successes:

- ✓ **Large-scale land donations** (second-highest in India).
- ✓ **Increased land ownership** among the poor.
- ✓ **Created awareness** about land reforms and inequality.

✗ Failures:

- ✗ **Poor execution and infertile land donations.**
- ✗ **Many landless farmers never got legal ownership.**
- ✗ **Movement declined as government land reforms took over.**

◆ **Final Verdict:**

The Bhoodan Movement in Odisha **was a noble initiative but lacked proper execution**. While it **inspired later land reforms**, its **impact was weakened** due to administrative failures and landlord resistance.

For real land justice, **government intervention and legal enforcement** became **more effective** than voluntary donations.

● **Key Takeaways for Odisha's Land Reforms**

- ✓ **Bhoodan started the conversation on land rights** but was not a sustainable solution.
- ✓ **Government-led reforms (OLR Act, 1960) had a more lasting impact.**
- ✓ **Future land reforms should combine legal enforcement with community participation**

● **Key Provisions of the OLR Act, 1960**

The Act covers five main areas: **Tenancy Reforms, Land Ceiling, Land Ownership, Tribal Land Protection, and Land Fragmentation Prevention.**

● **1. Tenancy Reforms**

The Act introduced several provisions to regulate tenancy and protect tenants' rights:

- **Security of Tenure:**
 - Tenants could not be evicted without proper legal grounds.
 - Eviction was allowed only under certain conditions (e.g., non-payment of rent, misuse of land).
- **Fixation of Fair Rent:**
 - Rent was fixed at a reasonable level (not exceeding 25% of gross produce).
- **Rights of Sharecroppers:**
 - Sharecroppers (Bhagachasis) were given protection from eviction.
 - They were allowed to claim ownership under specific conditions.

● **2. Land Ceiling and Redistribution**

To prevent land concentration, the Act imposed a **landholding ceiling**:

- **Ceiling Limits:**

- Initially, the ceiling was **33 acres of irrigated land** and **66 acres of unirrigated land**.
- After amendments (1973-74), the ceiling was reduced to **10 acres for irrigated land** and **15 acres for unirrigated land**.

- **Redistribution of Surplus Land:**

- Land exceeding the ceiling limit was acquired by the state and redistributed to landless farmers.

● 3. Ownership Rights to Tenants

- The Act allowed tenants who had been cultivating land for a long time to become owners.
- Tenants could purchase the land they tilled at a government-fixed price.

● 4. Protection of Tribal Land

- The Act strictly prohibited the transfer of tribal land to non-tribals.
- If tribal land was illegally acquired, it was **restored to the original tribal owner**.
- Special provisions under **The Odisha Scheduled Areas Transfer of Immovable Property (By Scheduled Tribes) Regulation, 1956** strengthened the Act's effectiveness.

● 5. Prevention of Land Fragmentation

- The Act discouraged division of land into small, uneconomical units.
- Consolidation of fragmented holdings was encouraged to improve agricultural efficiency.

● Amendments to the Odisha Land Reforms Act, 1960

Several amendments were made to strengthen the Act:

● 1. 1973-74 Amendments

- **Land ceiling** was reduced significantly.
- **Surplus land** was identified and distributed more efficiently.
- **Better protection** for tenants and sharecroppers.

● 2. 2002 Amendment

- Simplified procedures for **recording tenancy rights**.

- Strengthened **tribal land protection provisions**.

● 3. 2006 Amendment

- Introduced **digital land records** to reduce disputes.
- Streamlined procedures for **land transfer and ownership recognition**.

● Impact of the Odisha Land Reforms Act, 1960

✓ Positive Outcomes

- ✓ **End of landlordism:** Large landlords lost their control over tenant farmers.
- ✓ **Security for tenants:** Tenants could not be arbitrarily evicted.
- ✓ **More equitable land distribution:** Surplus land was distributed to landless farmers.
- ✓ **Protection of tribal land:** Reduced land alienation among tribals.
- ✓ **Agricultural productivity:** Consolidation helped improve efficiency.

✗ Challenges and Limitations

- ✗ **Implementation issues:** Bureaucratic delays in land redistribution.
- ✗ **Illegal land transfers:** Some landlords used loopholes to retain land.
- ✗ **Land record issues:** Many disputes arose due to poor land records.
- ✗ **Continued tribal land alienation:** Despite legal safeguards, tribals still lost land.

● Conclusion

The **Odisha Land Reforms Act, 1960** was a landmark law that significantly improved land ownership and tenancy security in Odisha. However, challenges like poor implementation and illegal land transfers still persist. Strengthening enforcement, updating land records, and ensuring grassroots participation remain key to achieving the Act's full potential.

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